

**MEMBERS HANDBOOK**

**VERSION 2**

**OCTOBER 2015**

## CONTENTS

Cornish Pilot Gigs	3
Glossary of terms	5
Preparing & Storing the gigs	6
Launching the gigs	7
Retrieving the gigs	9
Transporting the gigs	10
Rowing the gigs	11
Coxing the gigs	15
Crew responsibilities	21
Rowing in the Avon / Sea / Racing / Special events	24
Rowing membership	25
Erg Training	28
Junior Rowing	29
Bristol Gig Club rules	30
Health & Safety policy	32
Emergencies	34

## CORNISH PILOT GIGS

*Audience: General Public; New rowers*

- Gigs are 32 feet long, no wider than 4 feet 10 inches wide (at the widest point) and are planked in Cornish Small Leaf Elm.
- They are built to weigh approximately 7cwt (355.6kgs).
- There are 8 thwarts (seats); one for the Coxswain, 6 for the rowers and 1 (the "Seagull") for the Pilot.
- There are 3 rowers on each side of the gig.
- All gigs are built to the same specification and the Cornish Pilot Gig Club (CPGA) inspectors monitor each new gig during the construction.
- All modern gigs are built to the measurements of one gig - "Treffry", which was built by Peters of St Mawes in 1838.
- The old oars (sweeps) were usually made of ash and would measure up to 18 feet long.
- Modern oars are made of silver spruce and differ in size according to the position in the gig. The stroke and bow oars are shorter because the gig is narrower in these positions.
- The last gig used for pilotage was the "Gipsy" from St Agnes, Isles of Scilly on 21st December 1938. The ship was "SS Foremost" and the fee for pilotage was the equivalent of £3.65.
- Bristol Gig Club has two wooden gigs - Isambard, built by R-B Boatbuilding, and Young Bristol, built by the Slipway Co-operative. Both were built at Underfall Yard, here in Bristol. These 2 boats are the clubs' primary assets, and require considerable care and maintenance.
- Bristol Gig Club also has 2 plastic gigs - Brigstowe and Wapping Wharf and shares a third with All-Aboard - Bristol Blue.
- Modern plastic gigs are similar in weight and performance to wooden gigs, but older plastic gigs such as Brigstowe are significantly heavier. Racing

rules do not normally permit the use of plastic gigs, these are used primarily for training, as they can be left in the water.

## **RACING PILOT GIGS**

*Audience: General Public; New rowers, Novice Rowers*

There's plenty of information online about the history of pilot gigs, pilot gig racing, and the current sport.

One of the best resources to see what the sport is today is [www.gigrower.co.uk](http://www.gigrower.co.uk)

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Audience: New rowers, Novice Rowers*

<p>Boat terms people will shout to/at you:  <span style="display: block; text-align: right;">(coxing instructions are in the coxing section)</span></p>	
Bow	The front of the boat
Stern	The rear of the boat - where the cox sits
Painter	The rope at the bow or stern - used to moor the boat, and when moving the boat short distances - confusing shout for new rowers - 'grab the painter'.
Thole pins	The pins the oars sit between
Seats 1 to 6	1 is at the bow, 1 & 2 are bow pair, 3 & 4 middle pair, and 5 & 6 stroke pair, with no 6 being the stroke rower
Macon	Type of oar, shorter and wider. BGC own a set of men's and a set of women's (slightly smaller & lighter) macons.
Needle	Type of oar, longer and thinner. BGC owns needle oars including a set of junior oars (smaller and lighter).
Fender	Rope or more often plastic cylinder, hung over the side of the boat to protect against impact.
Bung	Brass screw-plug in the bottom of the boat to allow for drainage when out of the water - normally left out when in storage.
Bailer	Carton used to bail out the boats, typically a cut-down container used in the plastic boats following rain.
Gip	Grease to lubricate the oar leathers, BGC currently uses Vaseline.
Leathers	Leather wrapped around the oar at the point it crosses with the gunwale of the boat.
Strokeside	Those sitting on the port side, oar to rower's left.

Bowside	Those sitting on the starboard side, oar to rower's right.
Thwart	Seat

## **PREPARING THE GIGS – PLASTIC GIGS STORED ON THE WATER**

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers*

- The gigs have minimal equipment left in them, only the rudder and bailing containers. The rest of the kit must be retrieved from the store.
- Store location is advised to members, along with key locations, padlock codes and protocols. Take instructions from cox and more experienced rowers.
- If the boat contains water, due to rain, this needs to be bailed out before rowing. The coxswain prepares the rudder.
- Seats, oars, pin bucket with pins and gip, lights if required, and life vests for cox, juniors and any passengers must be taken to the boat and all put into place. Seats opposite pins, pins soft to stern.

## **STORING THE GIGS – PLASTIC GIGS STORED ON THE WATER**

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers*

- Storage is the reverse of preparation. Pins are removed where they are not required for fenders, and rubbish is to be removed from the boat and disposed of. The equipment is returned tidily to the store.
- The plastic boats are moored with a good gap to the wall to allow for movement, and mooring ropes are sprung. Ask experienced rowers for guidance.

## LAUNCHING THE GIGS – STORED IN THE MARINA OR AWAY AT EVENTS

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers*

- Teamwork is essential! At least 7 adults are required to launch a wooden or modern plastic gig. At least 10 if the heavier plastic gig is taken out of the water.
- The operation should be under the control of a responsible, experienced person - Cox, Crew Captain or Safety Officer.
- To get the boat ready it is taken out of storage. The cover ties are released, laid on top and the cover rolled up from the bow towards the stern. The cover is then set to one side. The string is released and laid on the ground to the side of the trailer. The wooden tarp supports are also set to one side, out of the way at the correct end of the boat.
- Before moving the boat get it kitted out, i.e. turn seats to their correct position, insert pins, insert the bung, lights if required and if taking off the trailer ensure the front knees (rubber supports) are down.
- Agree when to move/lift - "on three" or "after three" etc.
- The operation should be planned - make sure the path is clear.
- Nobody under 16 years old should lift the gig.
- Do not lift the gig if your medical condition precludes it - advise your cox in advance of any restriction.
- Please be reminded that a gig costs approximately £20,000 so it is important to take good care of the craft.
- Even more importantly, your backs are invaluable. Lift with a straight back, using the powerful leg muscles typical of top gig rowers to provide the strength! Knees should be bent, feet slightly apart, weight well distributed and head up.
- Lift under a thwart (seat) or a stringer - NEVER the gunwale.

- Before the session, make an inspection of the boat. If a serious defect is found the session should be aborted. If any defect or damage is found, the bosun should be informed as soon as is practical.
- Lift the bow and stern in turn onto their trolleys and transport the gig to the slip. **KEEP THE GIG UPRIGHT WHEN WHEELING IT ALONG ON THE TROLLEYS!**
- The launching ladder will be used to ease launching and retrieving the gigs. This seriously reduces both the risk of damage to the gigs and the level of exposure to dock water for the crews. Lay out the ladder at the bottom of the slip, with the weighted rungs in the water. Lift the lower end onto the ladder, slide the gig gently down towards the water. Lift the upper end onto the ladder and slide the gig into the water. You may find it easier to launch bow-first, as there is less risk of catching on the rungs. It also avoids the need for back paddling.
- Put the fenders out before heading down the slip.
- **MAKE SURE THE BUNG IS IN BEFORE PUTTING THE GIG IN THE WATER!** Water comes in really quickly through the bung hole, but seems to take much longer to drain out through it. Besides, rowing a submarine is just uncool.

## RETRIEVING THE GIGS

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers*

- Generally the reverse of launching.
- Note the advice on teamwork, control by one person, lifting and transporting the gig upright.
- The launching ladder will make retrieval much easier - lay the ladder along the slip as for launching, pull the gig up along it, then lift onto the trolleys, one end at a time. Again, this may be easier bow-first.
- Take the bung out, to allow water to drain out.
- The gig must be properly supported when not in use, otherwise the structure will be damaged. This means storing the gig upright and supporting the keel at three points. When stored on blocks this is achieved by placing the bow on its block first (you may find it easier to push down on the stern to do this). Then the stern is raised gently to make sure the bow is on its block. Push the stern block into place under the stern. If there is any spring in the boat when the stern is gently lifted, the stern block needs to go in further - one person only should gently try to lift the transom to feel if there is spring. Finally, push in the bilge supports (for some reason, also called Frenchmen). On the trailer slide onto the trailer, keeping straight on the rollers, stopping when the bow has reached the rubber catch. Put the knees up and tie onto the front of the trailer.
- To put into storage remove lights and pins, turn seats so they're hanging upside down, store oars under or in the wooden cover supports, connect and tighten the string when the equipment is in place and roll over the cover from the stern and tie underneath.
- When launching or retrieving from a beach, the gig should NOT be dragged along the beach, no matter how tired you are! It damages the hull and looks really bad.

## **TRANSPORTING THE GIGS**

*Audience: novice rowers, new crew members, new towers*

- When going to regattas or sea training we usually take our own gigs. They are then packed up for transport, which is generally belt-and-braces strapping. All crew are required to assist when packing up, both to go, and at the end of the regatta in preparation to return.
  - New towers will be given full instruction by an experienced tower
  - Crew assisting in packing up must follow the instructions of the tower
  - Straps need to be bucked portside, for access in case of stopping on motorways
  - Equipment including gazebos, boxes, need to be packed away either securely in the boat, or in the towing vehicle.
- New towers must seek advice on weight limits and towing vehicles.

## **MAINTAINING THE GIGS**

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers*

- Club members are needed to help with maintaining the boats. This typically includes:
  - Washing boats down after days away - to remove sand and mud
  - Sanding and painting - under direction of the bosun.
  - Turning and moving the boats between maintenance sessions, typically need 20 rowers so a general call is put out.

# ROWING THE GIGS

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers*

## **General**

- When launching from a beach, do not get in until the gig is afloat - you'll just end up grinding the hull (see above). Hence, please wear shoes that you don't mind getting wet (or take them off for launching). It's also a good idea to rinse the sand off, if possible, as it abrades the soleboards and stretchers.
- Cox first, then rowers, in order 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 if launching from a beach.
- Walk along the centreline of the boat - always on the soleboards and not the planking!
- Pick your pins on the way to your rowing station (if necessary). Remember - **S**oft pin to **S**tern. Do not push them in too firmly and take a spare to jam under your seat if racing.
- Sit down as quickly as possible.
- Check stretcher position and adjust if necessary.
- Lift your oar vertical and await the cox's instructions.
- If asked to fend off, do so with the handle end, not the blade - the oars cost over £200 each and the blades are delicate.

## **The Stretcher**

- The stretcher is a wooden bar on which you rest your feet and is used to push against during rowing.
- When sitting in your rowing position, your feet should be on the stretcher with your legs slightly bent.
- If the stretcher is not in the right position for you, remove the metal pin at the end of the stretcher by pulling it towards the bow of the gig. Lift the stretcher up at the pin side and slide it out of its fixing. Reposition the stretcher and replace the pin, making sure that it is secured properly.
- If you cannot find a comfortable stretcher position, it may be necessary to place a block over the stretcher.

- After a few rowing sessions, you should become aware of your preferred stretcher position.

### **Your Oar**

- The Oars are long, heavy, expensive and your responsibility!
- Each oar is individual and has a number on the shaft close to the handle. You must make sure you have the correct oar for your rowing position.
- As soon as you are in the gig, locate your oar and lift it into a vertical position with the blade uppermost. Sit in your rowing position while holding your oar firmly with its shaft between your knees.
- As soon as the Cox commands, put your oar between the thole pins with the blade in the water.

### **Holding the Oar**

- Hold the handle of the oar with two hands.
- The hand nearer the end of the oar should be under the oar with the palm facing upwards.
- The hand nearer the side of the gig (gunwale) should be on top of the oar with the palm facing downwards.
- Your hands should be approximately one hand width apart.

### **Ready to Row**

- Hold the oar with the blade out of the water with the curve of the blade facing the stern.
- The middle of the leather on the oar should be on the gunwale.
- Straighten your arms pushing the oar handle away from you.
- Lean forwards as far as possible.
- Tilt the top edge of the blade slightly towards the Cox - this will minimise the risk of "Catching a Crab".

### **The Stroke**

- Put the blade in the water so that the whole blade is covered with water "the Catch".
- Keeping your arms straight and pushing against the stretcher with your feet pull backwards "the Pull".
- Breathe out during the pull.
- The blade of the oar should be vertical in the water when the oar is perpendicular to the side of the boat.
- Lean backwards and then pull the handle of the oar towards your chest.
- At the end of the stroke, lift the blade out of the water "the Finish".
- Push the handle away from you, straighten your arms and lean forward "the Return".
- Breathe in during the return.
- Make sure the "Leather" on the oar is in contact with the gunwale (never row on the wooden part of the oar)! Try not to move the oar in and out while rowing.
- Do not rush the return as this is your chance to breathe and recover!

### **Holding Water**

- Put the oar blade into the water so that it is vertical.
- Hold the oar so that it is at right angles to the side of the gig.

### **Backwater**

- This enables the gig to be rowed backwards.
- Turn the oar so that the curve of the blade is facing the bow. When at the startline for a race and you need to backwater, keep the blade in the original rowing position so you can make a start instantly.
- With the oar blade vertically in the water, push the oar handle away from your body and lean forwards.
- Lift the oar blade out of the water and lean back.

### **Feathering your blade**

This is when you rotate the oar so that the top edge of the blade is tilted towards the bow of the gig during the return of your stroke

- At the end of the stroke, roll the top of the oar handle towards your body for the return. However, you shouldn't feather the blade to be parallel with the water - there should be an angle of about 30° between the blade and the water, with the top edge of the blade towards the bow of the gig.
- Take care not to feather before the end of the finish of your stroke (otherwise, you will catch a Crab).

### **Catching a Crab**

This is when the blade of your oar becomes horizontal when it is in the water. It then gets dragged down. It usually happens for one of two reasons:

1. Your blade was not vertical when you put it in the water.
  2. You have tried to "feather" your blade before it was lifted out of the water.
- If this happens, you need to act quickly to avoid breaking a pin, or even worse, the gig itself.
  - Lift the handle of the oar upwards and out of the thole pins, retrieve your oar hand-over-hand and replace between the pins.

### **Other Terms used by the Coxswain**

"Easy Oars"	Stop Rowing.
"Fend Off"	Push off using either your hands or the handle of the oar.
"Kit"	Lift your oar blade or pull in your oar to avoid hitting an object such as mooring buoy.
"Length"	Longer Strokes, keeping the oar blade in the water for longer.
"Rate"	The number of strokes per minute (speed of the strokes).
"Timing"	Concentrate on keeping in time with the stroke rower.
"Weight"	Pull harder with more effort.
"Ship up"	Raise the oars into the air, then lay them down into the boat.

# COXING THE GIGS

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers; new crew; new coxes*

- The coxswain is the person in charge of a boat, particularly its navigation and steering. And that's Wikipedia's definition, so it must be true. The basic facts are that the coxswain is responsible for the safety of all in the gig and is in charge, so the coxswain's orders must be obeyed.
- All coxswains must be in good health with adequate vision and hearing, particularly when coxing at night. No-one who is subject to epileptic fit or blackouts shall steer a boat. In cases of doubt, medical advice should be obtained.
- The coxswain must wear a lifejacket at all times - this is a Bristol Floating Harbour rule and not complying will jeopardise our ability to row in the harbour. Rowing away from the harbour, the coxswain must wear a lifejacket and at all times if any one of the crew is under 16 or cannot swim - this crew member must also wear a life jacket.
- The coxswain must be aged at least 16, or under the supervision of a Junior Co-ordinator.
- The coxswain's station is on the coxswain's thwart. It is NOT on the bar in the stern of the boat. If you need a bit of distance from the stroke rower, sit on an upturned bucket on the "cox box" which has been lovingly made for that very purpose.
- Coxswains shall assess the weather conditions / rowing ability of the rowers.
- Coxswains decide whether to cancel rowing.
- Coxswains shall ensure that every member of the crews of which they have charge is aware of the appropriate safety procedures at all times. This is particularly important with new or less experienced rowers.
- Coxswains shall ensure that the whole crew, including themselves, are dressed suitably and adequately protected for the weather conditions they are likely to encounter. The coxswain can easily get very cold, as they don't do much exercise, bar the constant yelling.
- Coxswains shall be in charge of the VHF Radio, if one is carried.

- Whenever possible Coxswains should have the use of a mobile telephone.
- Regular Coxswains of Junior crews (under 16 years) shall have a successful DBS Disclosure certificate.
- Coxswains should be aware of the dangers and symptoms of Hypothermia.
- Pull the right hand line to go right and the left hand line to go left. This sounds simple, but takes a while to get used to - practice on a quiet day, with an experienced coxswain on hand the first time you try it.
- Be aware of vessels all around you - take a look behind you every now and again, especially when starting after a rest.

The following represents the knowledge that the Coxswain must develop:

- Learn and use simple commands for boat control both on and off the water. Use them correctly, clearly and instinctively.
- Know how to use a VHF Radio and have knowledge of radio etiquette.
- Understand the basic commands and signals of other water users.
- Be aware of all commercial ship / dock movements.
- Understand and carry out safety procedures and regulations applicable to the water they use, especially those relating to right of way, powerboats, sailing craft and commercial shipping etc.
- Understand local navigation rules of the water.
- Keep well clear of all commercial shipping including ferries etc.
- On unfamiliar water, become acquainted with local regulations and practices and of the existence, nature and location of particular hazards before going afloat.
- Recognise and respect the rights and needs of other water users.
- Be conversant with safety and rescue procedures in the case of an accident.
- Watch out for other water users at all times.
- Watch out for unexpected floating objects.
- Ensure that crews are using safe rowing equipment.

- Be aware of weather and water conditions and arrange the outing to avoid any danger. Especially in winter be aware of storms and high winds.
- When crews are rowing away from home water, the Coxswain shall ascertain the local code of practice, and at regattas, any special traffic rules to be observed, and ensure crews fully understand them.
- Coxswains of junior crews should be aware that youngsters are unlikely to be able to generate a high level of body warmth, so they need more protection.
- Coxswains should be aware of life-saving and resuscitation techniques.
- Coxswains/Coaches of beginners and juniors have an extra responsibility. Those who are new to the sport are likely to concentrate on their own rowing to the exclusion of all else, and are thus likely not to be aware of approaching danger. Beginners must never be allowed on the water unsupervised.
- Novice Coxswains shall be trained by senior Coxswains and with regards to weather conditions.
- In the case of an accident in which damage to equipment and/or an injury have occurred, or a near-miss, the Coxswain must notify the Safety Officer with a full description of the incident; the Coxswain must also advise the Club Chairman and the parent / guardian of all juniors involved.

Cox training is available elsewhere on the website and through the club.

## **The Rules of the Road**

*Audience: New coxes*

Just like on a bicycle, or in a car, the coxswain has to obey the rules of the road. They are different on the water, but the most important are summarised below.

- Every vessel must at all times keep a proper look-out by sight and hearing in order to judge if risk of collision exists.
- Any vessel must proceed at a safe speed, which she can take action to avoid collision and able to stop within the distance for the prevailing

conditions (remember that a gig is a very fast craft, but don't forget that getting all your rowers to hold water slows the gig pretty sharply).

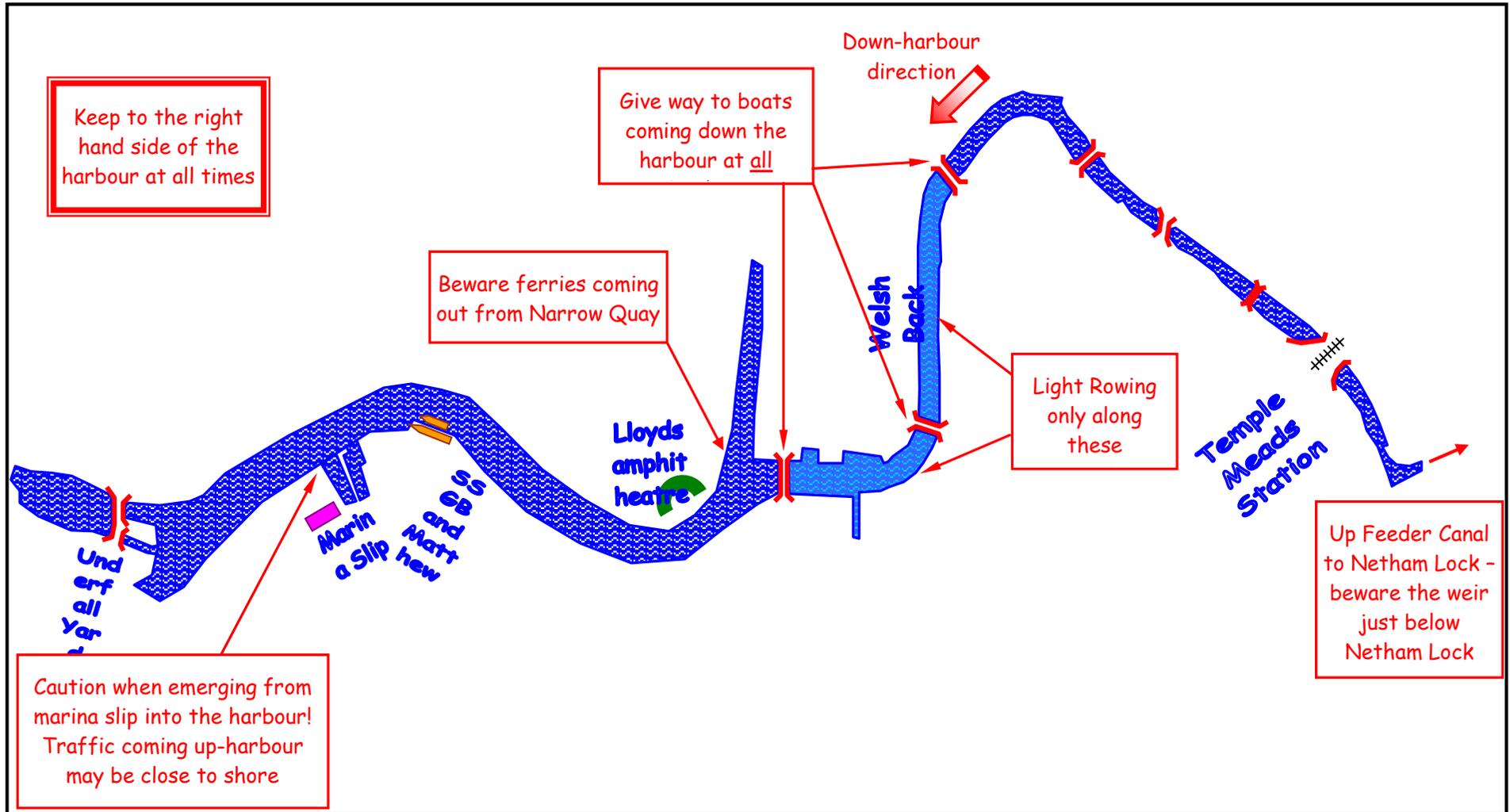
- Actions taken to avoid collision should be positive, obvious and made in good time.
- A vessel proceeding along a narrow channel must keep to starboard. The Floating Harbour is classed as a narrow channel. It should also be crossed in the shortest distance - i.e. straight across.
- The overtaking vessel is obliged to keep clear of the vessel being overtaken. The overtaking vessel may pass to either side of the vessel being overtaken - this is at the discretion of the coxswain.
- When two vessels are meeting head-on both must alter course to starboard so that they pass port side to port side (that's left side to left side for landlubbers).
- When two vessels are crossing, the vessel which has the other on the starboard side must give way (if you're on the right, you're in the right).
- The give-way vessel must take early and substantial action to keep well clear.
- The stand-on vessel (i.e. the one that is not obliged to give way) must take action to avoid collision if it becomes clear that the give-way vessel is not taking appropriate action.

Bristol's Floating Harbour also has a few particular requirements of its own (see also the diagram at the end of this handbook).

- Give way to sailing vessels and beware of sudden changes of direction - it can get very busy with dinghies between the marina and Underfall Yard, especially at weekends.
- Be very cautious when emerging from the marina slip into the channel - the boats coming up-harbour will be close to your side of the harbour.
- Conversely, be aware of rowing shells coming out of the marina slip area when rowing up-harbour - in the case of a coxed eight, the boat is mainly out in the channel before the coxswain can see harbour traffic.
- Vessels travelling from the Underfall end of the harbour towards the Temple Meads end are classed as up-harbour traffic; those travelling the other way are classed as down-harbour traffic.

- When passing under bridges, prepare by taking a line which gives you a good view through the bridge well before you go through the bridge (check behind before changing direction). Only proceed if it is safe.
- Vessels travelling through bridges in the up-harbour direction must give way to those travelling through bridges in the down-harbour direction.
- Beware anyone who is going to throw missiles from a bridge or the bank. Warn your crew if you think it's going to happen.
- Light rowing only in the stretch from Prince Street bridge (between the Arnolfini and the Industrial Museum) and Bristol Bridge (just up-harbour of the Glass Boat). Please avoid hitting water birds with the gig or oars - they don't like it and it gets us a bad name.
- The junction between the Arnolfini, the Lloyds Amphitheatre and the Industrial Museum can be busy, with ferries often steaming out of Narrow Quay at speed. The whole junction should be treated as a roundabout, except that traffic entering it has priority ("on the right, in the right"). Needless to say, follow a course on the right hand side.
- If you decide to row up the Feeder Canal as far as Netham Lock and into the River Avon, be aware that there is a weir just down the river from the lock.
- If you are rowing at dusk or dark, you must show a white, all-round light at each end of the boat. There are no excuses for not being lit and the Harbour Master can take us off the water if we row without lights.
- The water in the Floating Harbour carries a varying risk of E-coli and Leptospirosis (Weil's disease). Cover up any open cuts before going near the water and wash your hands after the session, especially if you're about to eat. Crisps at the pub also count as food! If you develop flu-like symptoms after a session, let your GP know and that you have been in contact with dock water.
- General: Rowing activity is conducted in accordance with the CPGA Health and Safety Guidelines and Water Safety Guidelines (currently 09 Mar 2015), as well as Bristol Harbour Rules, as applicable.

# Bristol Floating Harbour, showing major hazards



## CREW RESPONSIBILITIES

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers; co-ordinators; crew*

### **Responsibilities of a Coordinator**

Co-ordinators are appointed for each crew, racing, training or special event, and co-ordinators are in place for open, novice, social and junior rowing. Co-ordinators responsibilities are as follows:

- Organise coxes for training sessions,
- Plan rowing and training sessions and liaise with Cox of each session (if in competitive crew),
- Cancel unfilled sessions and inform crews before or after if they need to put boats away or get them out,
- Before cancelling sessions check other crews reserve lists to try and fill crews or contact rowers who aren't in selected crews including juniors.
- If rowing collect compound key. If not rowing appoint someone else to collect compound key.
- Inform rowing captain of intentions to enter regattas within plenty of time,
- Make sure the crews rowing are those written on the calendar,
- Make sure boat lights are bright and replace batteries before starting sessions on the water,
- Start soaking leathers, if oar leather is damaged, ready to be put on the oar 24 hours later. Inform the boson of this,
- Inform the boson of any damage to the boat, the kit and oars straight after any session so repairs can be made as soon as possible.
- Co-ordinators of crews training in the harbour must check the lifting capability of their crew prior to rowing. If the crew includes injured rowers and there are insufficient rowers to lift then the co-ordinator must switch to a boat or time such that lifting is not required.
- Co-ordinators of regattas and events are responsible for ensuring they understand the safety requirements of attendance brief the crew accordingly and act on safety awareness throughout the event. Decide if

weather conditions are unsafe for training (for example ice or strong winds) if no decision has been made by the captain or health and safety officer before hand.

- Attend all rowing committee meetings planned or at least send a representative from your crew.

#### Suggested rules to be decided upon soon;

- Take turns with other coordinators to organise regattas on the day of the event including crew registrations, collecting money and organising launching and trailering boats.

#### **Responsibilities of a rower**

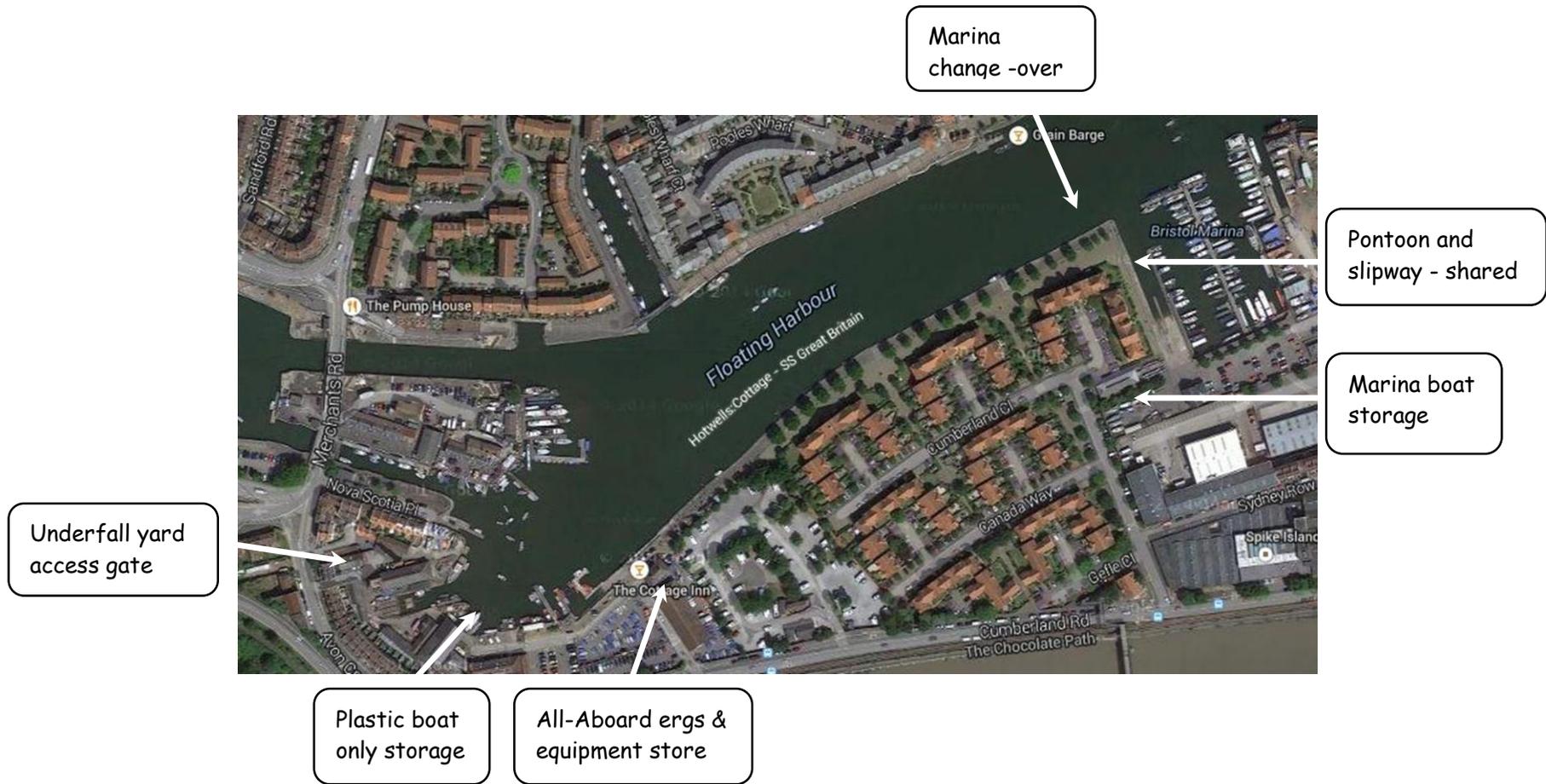
Selected crew also have responsibilities to their crew, co-ordinator and cox - as follows:

- Assist with the getting out/putting away of boats before and after their session if required,
- Assist with any maintenance with the boats on the request of the boson.
- Arrive at your rowing session early as to allow your session to start on time.
- Commit to any training decided by your crew as a whole,
- Report any maintenance requirements you personally notice to your coordinator,
- If you aren't available to row make sure you get a replacement and inform your coordinator in plenty of time,
- Make sure you update the calendar if any replacements are covering your seat in the boat,
- Report any issues or suggestions, you would like, to be raised at future committee meetings to your coordinators,
- Grease your oar at the start of every session or when required. DO NOT let the oars be used while leather is dry!

#### Suggested rules to be decided upon soon;

- Each crew must be able to supply a cox to at least one other rowing session on their training night.

## Bristol Floating harbour - boat & kit locations



Key locations and lock codes are advised to members only & changed regularly

## ROWING IN THE AVON / SEA / RACING / SPECIAL EVENTS

*Audience: All club members*

- Rowing in the Avon depends which end of the harbour you exit:
  - Exiting from Netham lock, for example to row to Beeses, you simply need to check lock opening times, and be careful along the narrow channel.
  - Exiting to go under the suspension bridge is tidal, therefore a competent coxswain, understanding of times and lock times, and a strong crew are required along with safety boats, VHF radios and lifejackets. Coxswains to review the RA (from H&S Officer) and make necessary adjustments.
- Rowing in the open sea or at other river events, Coxswains are required to attend a briefing on the morning of the event, or take instruction from local club personnel.
- Special events are often extra long, extra arduous or have additional difficulty. Thus rowers will be selected who have shown that they are capable of the undertaking.
- During races organisers have safety boats.
- When training or leisure rowing in the sea, not in racing situation, an emergency canister must be content checked and taken on board by the cox and someone onshore aware of the rowing plan. Radios, and life jackets as appropriate.
- Being at any event requires insertion and extraction. The cox and crew are responsible for their own safety, following safety instructions as given and maintaining a risk aware status.

## ROWING MEMBERSHIP

*Audience: New rowers; novice rowers; crew; co-ordinators*

- The club is run by and for the benefit of members - there are no paid staff, we are all volunteers
- The membership fees cover: boats, equipment, maintenance, insurance etc. Additional fund raising enables further equipment purchase and future housing.
- The club is part of the CPGA = Cornish Pilot Gig Association.

### **Club Activities**

- Regular rowing is split into the following categories:
  - o Novice rowers - typically less than 10 sessions
  - o Open rowing - anyone in the club who wishes to train but is not in a crew
  - o Training crews - regular crews who want to improve but have no race pending
  - o Race crews - selected crews for upcoming races
  - o Social rowing - open to all rowers, no drills, just rowing
- Calendar - accurate completion of the club calendar is required to meet our insurance requirements, therefore co-ordinators and crew must update the calendar to show all changes
- How-to use the calendar - *see separate calendar use guide*
- Open rowing rules
  - o Open rowing sessions are available to any rower not in a selected crew. Many open rowing sessions will have experienced coxes that will encourage you in your technique.
  - o When signing up, please put your name and contact number on the calendar. Make a note of the number of the session co-ordinator, so you can contact them easily.
  - o Open rowing sessions without named co-ordinators will be cancelled.

- o Open rows can be booked up to one week in advance, one at a time. You can sign up for more than one session each week. However if you are rowing on Tuesday's Open Row for instance, you cannot sign up for next Tuesday until you have finished that row. Please book within reason, allowing for others to get a chance in a boat. The Captain has the right to intervene where they notice anyone overzealously booking
- o Non-crew rowers who are co-ordinating open rows, or are able to cox, can book further in advance if they are co-ordinating that session, or coxing on the same day - this is to encourage co-ordinators and coxes.
- o If for some you can no longer row, you must organise a replacement yourself (see below).
- Reserves;
  - o There is a Reserves list for every session on the Calendar, if you want to find a replacement you can contact one of them and then you/they need to change the calendar to add their name/number. You can sign up as a reserve on any row, open or selected at any time. Some selected crews may have named individuals they will give priority for reserve rowing,
- When in a crew you are assigned regular rowing slots, and are expected to attend these - crews' responsibilities are listed above.

## Regattas

- Competitive race crews are selected for upcoming chosen regattas. The main events of the year are the World Championships in the Isles of Scilly, in May marking the start of the season, and the Newquay championships in September, marking the end of the season - though there are 'friendly' regattas before and after these as well as several regattas over the summer.
- The club competes with mens, womens, junior, senior (>18), vets (>40), super-vets (>50) and mixed crews.
- Selections vary each year, both for Eligibility for selection, and Selection criteria as well as which regattas the club has selected for competitive crews. The process will be notified and updated through the season.
- Club regattas are social regattas where we seek to introduce new rowers to the sea and competitive rowing by putting new rowers in boats with seasoned competitors. These regattas are open to all, crews are mixed up, and we

don't train specifically for these regattas. Club members who want to watch, build sandcastles, eat ice-creams and cheer on the crews at an event are very welcome. These are chosen and advised to members at the beginning of each season.

- Those attending regattas share costs of travel and accommodation, and pay a donation towards towing costs and general maintenance of the gigs, typically around £10 per race.
- Each regatta has a nominated co-ordinator who is responsible for organising a tower and preparing equipment for transport to the regatta. They are also responsible for collecting race donations, making a list of all attendees and delivering any donations and attendance lists to the Treasurer.
- Regatta packing list:
  - Club vest & kit
  - Sportswear - as you usually wear for training - try hats, sunglasses, hairbands etc. beforehand to ensure they help not hinder
  - Wet footwear, racing footwear & leisure footwear
  - Swimwear (for afterward), & towel
  - Change of clothes
  - Water and nutritious food - there is generally water, bananas, BBQ and cake for sale, so for pre-race nutrition you're better taking your own
  - Consider hydration salts in hot conditions
  - First aid eg plasters, painkillers
  - Beer tokens - for the BBQ and cake, and beer (as long as you're not driving) afterward
  - Usually camping gear if a weekend trip

## Events

- The club semi-regularly organises local social rows, eg Sunday lunch rows. Keep an eye out on the Sunday calendar, and on club emails.
- The club attends special events, as long as someone is enthusiastic enough to co-ordinate. For example the Great River Race in London, racing with other boats in Holland - and one-off events such as the Jubilee. These are great fun, but check costs before committing as they can be expensive.
- Crews often organise training days and attendance at other local events.

- Social events are also held in Bristol out of the boats regularly throughout the season and beyond.
- BGC holds its own regatta each year, and exhibits at the Harbour Festival.

## **ERG TRAINING**

- BPGC has access to the Ergs at All-Aboard.
- Selected crews have dedicated erg sessions, open sessions are available for all rowers. Sign-up is via the calendar.
- Use of the Ergs must be under the supervision of a trained and nominated erg co-ordinator, access is not otherwise permitted.
- Such person will provide access, and limited training guidance.

Payment for erg training is via the honesty box, thus please be honest - and ensure the calendar matches attendance for tracking purposes.

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## **JUNIOR ROWERS**

*Audience: Junior rowers, parents*

Regulations for junior rowers are governed by the CPGA and administered by the Welfare Officer. These are set for the advancement and protection of youth rowers. Key items for the information of parents and rowers are:

- Personnel managing the youth section have background and / or interest in youth sport, and are CRB checked.
- Child safety and security are managed in accordance with the CPGA guidelines.

Guidelines followed are in this regard are CPGA documents:

G1 Terms and abbreviations in use

G2 The role of the club Welfare Officer

[G3 The role of the CPGA Welfare Officer]

G4 Indicators of Good and Poor Practice within clubs

G5 Code of conduct for Parents + consent forms

G6 Code of conduct for Young People

G7 Text and Email messaging

G8 Physical contact and young people in rowing

G9 Safeguarding and Photography

G10 Classifications and indicators of abuse

G11 Receiving Recording Reporting suspicions and allegations of abuse + forms

G12 Procedure for recruiting volunteers CRB checks + forms

G13 Useful Contact details

G14 Transport and Trips away with Junior rowers + forms

G15 Working with Local Safeguarding Children Boards



## BRISTOL GIG CLUB RULES

*Audience: Club members*

1. The boats of the club shall be for the use of Active members at the discretion of the Crew Captains or Chairperson.
2. No visiting rower shall be permitted to row in a club boat to the exclusion of a club member.
3. Any disputes concerning rowing in any particular boat or rowing position shall be settled by the Coxswain or Crew Captains.
4. The selection of crews to participate in regattas shall be decided by the Crew Captains and agreed by the Committee if required.
5. Every member either starting or returning from a rowing session must assist in launching / removing the boat from the water and help to collect / return the boat to storage area and collect / return oars, rudder and all equipment from / to the storage area.
6. The coxswain shall be deemed the person in charge of the boat.
7. Storage of personal items on the club premises and storage area is not permitted.
8. Orders to purchase Services and / or equipment can only be issued after sanction from the Committee.
9. Each crew co-ordinator will be issued with a key or code to gain access to the equipment storage areas only and must be surrendered on leaving the club.
10. Any trophies gained by a crew shall become the property of the club for display purposes. Individual medals received shall become the property of the individual.
11. Any member taking part in a regatta must wear a club vest and suitable clothing and footwear.
12. Members may row for another club at an event on permission given by a Crew Captain or Coxswain if permitted under CPGA rules.

13. Attendance at regattas is entirely voluntary and all travel and accommodation expenses must be absorbed by members attending. Towers will be reimbursed for petrol and wear and tear at a rate of 40p per mile.
14. No active member will be permitted to either train or participate in an event unless annual subscriptions are fully paid up.
15. Visitor rowers must pay £5 expenses per person and sign an indemnity form before being allowed to board any club boat. Coxswains to ensure this is adhered to before departure on a session.
16. Any personal property or vehicle left on the club premises is left entirely at the owner's risk. The Committee shall not be held responsible in any way for loss or damage or theft to / of any article.

# BRISTOL PILOT GIG CLUB - HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

*Audience: All club members*

## **Statement**

Bristol Pilot Gig Club is a voluntary organisation run by and for its membership. An elected committee run the operations of the club. The club promotes health and fitness through the sport of pilot gig rowing, and it is recognised that this is physically strenuous and has the potential to cause injury. This risk is managed through awareness and training of club members.

## **Responsibilities**

Committee	Maintenance of governance systems. Preparing Risk Assessments for relevant functional areas, and communicating required actions.
Safety Officer	Advising on compliance matters, disseminating actions from generic risk assessments, maintaining generic H&S documentation. Maintaining the incident log.
Bosun	Maintaining safe boats and equipment, including life vests, safety canisters, first aid kit.
Co-ordinators	Ensuring crews capable of undertaking activities, and altering activities if not. Require an understanding of relevant RA, or developing a new/adapted RA if co-ordinating a new event.
Coxswains	Responsible for the boat from storage, through rowing and back to storage, in accordance with the relevant navigation rules and as described in club guidance.
Event managers	Specific responsibilities allocated at special events.
Club members	Act in accordance with training and guidelines.

## **Arrangements**

- Generic Risk Assessments in place for regular events.

- Specific Risk Assessments developed for extraordinary activities.
- Incident log maintained, in accordance with CPGA guidelines.
- Handbook /website includes instructions in accordance with RA mitigations.
- Regular newsletter and continual training, monitoring and direction.

## COMMON INJURIES – AND PREVENTION TIPS

*Audience: New rowers*

- Rowing is a physical sport, both in and out of the boat. The club maintains the sport as accessible, by having plastic boats which remain in the water so that those who cannot lift the very heavy boats do not need to in order to be able to row, though this restricts such rowers to open and social rowing.

### **Common issues:**

- Blisters - you may experience blisters on your hands, but you're a true gig rower when you get blisters where you can't see them without a mirror:
  - Some people like gloves, some hate them - go for weightlifting, cycling or sailing gloves if you want to try them;
  - To prevent the commonest gig-rower's blister try:
    - Bamboo pants;
    - Double layer lower half (eg cycling shorts under baggy trouser);
    - Slidey Lycra shorts/trouser;
    - Grease - from simple Vaseline to posher anti-chafing creams;
    - And when you've got the blister - sudocrem (other brands are available) - healing cream.
- Sprains and strains - both from lifting the boat if you've taken more than your share, and from rowing if you push it too far. Be aware of your limits, and aim to keep within these. If you do suffer a sprain or strain ice it, rest it, and let your co-ordinator and cox know when you return to rowing.
- Hot and cold - we are very lucky since we have access to an inland waterway to be able to row through the winter, something most coastal clubs would not consider. This means we can row when the pontoons are icy, it can be very cold with low temperatures, wind and rain. Wear layers to keep warm before and after rowing. Keep hydrated when rowing in winter as well as summer. In summer stay hydrated and advise your cox if you feel faint.
- Feet & footwear - if you're wearing soft shoes, and you get numb feet - the good news is you're doing it right! Rowers prefer relatively solid soles, such as walking boots, as you are pushing hard against a narrow wooden bar. Light pumps or sandals are inappropriate. When going to regattas take easy to

change footwear such as wellies or plastic shoes for getting the boat in and out of the water, and racing footwear you can slip on and do up quickly.

# EMERGENCIES

Important phone numbers & contacts in an emergency:

- Emergency services 999 (I bet you knew that one!)
- Bristol Harbour Office (Harbourmaster) 0117 903 1484
- Safety officer hands@bristolgigclub.co.uk

CPGA advice on recognising and dealing with hypothermia and sunstroke are included at the end of this document.

**If there is any incident, accident or near-miss, it must be reported to the Bristol Gig Club Safety Officer.**

[Reporting is important so that future accidents can be prevented. On the water it can highlight potential accident blackspots and enable mitigations to be put in place; out of the water we have, for example, made alterations to the trailer when members have suffered cuts. Within Gig Rowing a number of heart-attacks at Regattas, and successful rescues have led to many clubs reviewing their emergency action plan - we are lucky in the city, as we are close to hospitals, but we still need to get casualties safely there, and know extraction points]

Specific Incidents:

In the event of Capsize / Swamping:

- Coxswain is in charge.
- Rowers attempt to retrieve oars and use as flotation.
- Rowers and Coxswain to "HELP" or "HUDDLE".
- Rowers and Coxswain to remain with the gig (hold on to the gunwale).
- If possible bail out the gig and row to nearest safe shore.
- If not possible - Coxswain to summon help from Coastguard by radio / flares etc.
- Coxswain to complete Accident Report.
- Coxswain to inform Club Chairman and Safety Officer.
- Coxswain to inform the parent / guardian of all juniors involved.

Accident: Coxswain is in charge.

- 1st Aid to be administered where necessary.
- Coastguard to be contacted if necessary.
- Coxswain to complete Accident Report.
- Coxswain to inform Club Chairman and Safety Officer and Parent / Guardian of all juniors involved.

## RESCUE AND RESUSCITATION

Resuscitation should only be undertaken by qualified First Aiders and should be started immediately, even whilst the casualty is still in the water. Members are directed towards St Johns or RYA First Aid courses.

Finding a Person Requiring Rescue:

- Establish there is no danger to yourself or the casualty.
- If you see someone in difficulties in the water, DO NOT go into the water after the casualty immediately.
- Look for something to pull the casualty out (such as a lifebuoy, oar, rope or clothing).
- Lie down to prevent yourself being pulled in.
- If you are in a Safety Boat, carefully approach the casualty if it is safe to do so.
- Having rescued the casualty, obtain shore help immediately.

Assess the Casualty:

- Establish responsiveness by shouting "are you OK" loudly and gently shaking their shoulder.

Resuscitation:

- If necessary, perform resuscitation if you feel that you are able.
- Get emergency assistance by calling 999.

## SURVIVAL PRINCIPLES

Survival is the ability to look after yourself and other people in an emergency. The principles of personal and group survival are the same. They require careful consideration.

## SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Survival in a deep-water emergency depends on the individual's ability to use knowledge, judgement, skill and fitness to cope with the situation. It is important to remain calm and where possible consider the following procedure:

### PRE-ENTRY

Before entering the water check:

- Lifejackets are being worn and are correctly fastened.
- Availability of assistance.
- Establish who is in charge (Coxswain).
- Number of people in the group and their abilities.
- Availability of buoyancy and other aids.
- Environmental conditions.
- Removal of hazardous items of clothing.
- Method or means of survival.

### ENTRY

Entries should be carried out calmly and with control.

- Plan entry carefully.
- Minimise risk and injury.
- Select correct method of entry for conditions.

### IMMERSION

Immediately following entry:

HELP and HUDDLE survival methods are valuable in any situation

- Float, Scull or Tread water in a relaxed manner.
- Put on or Secure Lifejacket.
- Hold on to Buoyancy aid for support and stay with the boat.

### PERSONAL SURVIVAL

- Only swim when absolutely necessary.
- It is essential to conserve body heat and energy.
- If you are alone use the HELP survival method.

### HELP (Heat Escape Lessening Posture)

If you are wearing a lifejacket you should adopt the HELP position to conserve energy and heat.

- Keep your legs together and straight.
- Press both arms against your upper body.
- Keep your head out of the water.

#### GROUP SURVIVAL

- Appoint a Leader (Coxswain).
- Keep together.
- Stay with the boat.
- Supervise and look after the weaker swimmers.
- Use survival and buoyancy aids.
- Support each other (HUDDLE).
- Avoid danger and tiring action.
- Encourage each other.

#### HUDDLE

The Huddle position is useful for small groups wearing lifejackets. It works on the same principle as the HELP position by reducing loss of body heat.

- Press the sides of your chests together.
- Press lower bodies together.
- Put arms around each other's backs at waist level.

#### WITHOUT A LIFEJACKET

- Hold on to the side of the gig.
- Use an oar as an additional floatation aid.
- Adopt the HELP or HUDDLE posture if possible.
- Stay as still as possible.
- Scull, float & tread water.

#### THINK POSITIVELY

- Make a plan.
- Stay afloat.
- Relax.
- Hold on to a buoyant aid (eg oar and boat).
- Keep body and limbs submerged.
- Retain clothing.
- Swim slowly if you have to.
- Change position / stroke regularly to lessen muscle fatigue.

- Keep your eyes open.
- Breathe regularly and in a controlled manner.
- Attract attention by raising one arm above your head.

#### SIGNALS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- Red Flares / Orange Smoke Signal.
- Slow and repeated raising and lowering of outstretched both arms to the side.
- Six blasts of a whistle (or fog horn) at 1 minute intervals.
- Shout.

#### REMEMBER IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN COLD WATER

- Keep calm.
- Float quietly, clinging where possible to a buoyant aid / boat.
- Use HELP to help reduce loss of heat from your body.
- Use the HUDDLE position where there is more than one person in the water.
- Stay with the boat.
- Even exceptional swimmers can be overcome by shock and cold within very short distances.
- Do not remove clothing except for heavy items.
- Avoid immersing your head in the water.
- Supervise and look after weaker swimmers.
- Encourage each other.



## **Hypothermia**

Avoidance must be the first consideration at all times. Hypothermia occurs when the whole body has been chilled to a much lower than normal temperature, i.e. below 35°C compared with the normal body temperature of 37°C.

Dress to beat the cold - Layers of clothing are more effective than one warm garment. The outer layer should be wind and waterproof.

Do not take or give alcohol in cold conditions. Alcohol accelerates heat loss as well as impairing judgment.

Be alert to the warning signs of cold both in yourself and others. Coaches of young children must be particularly aware of the risks to their charges of exposure to cold. Exposed arms, legs and head heighten the risk.

If a person has fallen into cold water their body will lose heat rapidly. To reduce heat loss keep clothes on except heavy coats or boots which may drag the person down.

Sudden immersion in cold water can have a shock effect which can disrupt normal breathing, reducing even a proficient swimmer to incompetence. Confusion and an inability to respond to simple instructions will become evident.

When Hypothermia is suspected, your aims must be to prevent the casualty losing more body heat and to re-warm the casualty. Send for help. Hypothermia is a medical emergency whether the patient is conscious or unconscious. If conscious the victim should be actively re-warmed under careful observation. If unconscious the victim must be got to medical aid as soon as possible. Only give resuscitation if you are a qualified first aider.

### **Symptoms and signs of Hypothermia**

The following are the most usual symptoms and signs, but all may not be present:

- Unexpected and unreasonable behaviour possibly accompanied by complaints of cold and tiredness.
- Physical and mental lethargy with failure to understand a question or orders.
- Slurring speech.
- Violent outburst of unexpected energy and violent language, becoming uncooperative.
- Failure of or abnormal in vision.
- Twitching.
- Lack of control of limbs, unsteadiness and complaining of numbness and cramp.
- General shock with pallor and blueness of lips and nails.
- Slow weak pulse, wheezing and coughing.

A very dangerous situation is still present when a person who has been in the water for some time is taken out. Further heat loss must be prevented. The victim should be protected against the wind and rain if possible. Re-warming can be carried out by:

- Wrapping the victim in a thermal/exposure blanket.

Others placing their warm bodies against



### **Sunstroke (Hyperpyrexia)**

Sunstroke (hyperpyrexia) is the high fever and collapse due to failure of the heat regulation systems of the body. If the rectal temperature is over 42°C(108°F), irreversible brain damage can occur. The body's temperature can be raised as a result of the ambient temperature and is amplified by arduous physical activity such as rowing combined with failing to drink sufficiently. Heat stroke often occurs in children who have been outside on a really hot day and occurs more commonly in children with cystic fibrosis than other children.

#### Symptoms:

- headache
- general malaise
- nausea
- chest pain
- anxiety
- fatigue

#### Signs:

- hot dry flushed skin
- rapid pulse and respiratory rate

#### In severe cases:

- vomiting
- shock and circulatory collapse
- convulsions
- coma with pin-point pupils

#### First aid:

- tepid sponging or bathing
- cooling using a fan
- do NOT use ice baths, ice packs or cold air. This can cause vasoconstriction which reduces heat loss and can be fatal as shivering increases heat production
- adults: Rx two Aspirin 300mg tablets by mouth every 4hours

- children: Rx Paracetamol every 6h, dose according to age
- SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION